

# **Japanese Education in No.1 and No.2 Korean-Chinese Middle Schools in Shenyang City, PR. China: its Now and Future**

**Keywords** : comparative Japanese education, Korean-Chinese student, pilot study

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## **1. Introduction**

With the development of cultural exchange between China and Japan, more and more Chinese students have passed the entrance examinations to Japanese universities and registered as international students in Japan. For example, Kanazawa University lying in Ishikawa Prefecture has accepted more students from China than those from any other countries in recent years.

Among them are Korean-Chinese students who are bilingual, with both Korean and Chinese being their native languages, and whose first foreign language is Japanese. Most of them speak good Japanese. Generally speaking, the courses of foreign languages being offered in Chinese schools (from elementary schools to universities) are divided into two groups: the major group and the minor group. Only the English language belongs to the major group, which means that English course is a required subject in almost every school. The Japanese and the Russian languages belong to the minor group. That is to say, Japanese and Russian courses are compulsory subjects in only a few schools in one city. Furthermore, the number of such schools in which Japanese and Russian are offered is restricted. The courses of other foreign languages are offered in only a few universities as compulsory subjects or elective subjects.

Because of the rapid development of import and export between China and Japan in recent years, the fact is that the number of Japanese-learning students is far more than the number of Russian-learning students. For example, the College of Foreign Languages at Shenyang University accepted 18 Japanese-majors in 2004, while they accepted only 6 Russian-majors.

In order to show the present situation in which Korean-Chinese students learn the Japanese language in China, the author conducted a pilot study in the No.1 Korean-Chinese Middle School and the No.2 Korean-Chinese Middle School in Shenyang City in March, 2005. The

study, by using a questionnaire, attempted to show the change in the number of students learning Japanese from the year 2000 to the year 2004. The 6 questions on the questionnaire were intended to determine the students' attitude towards learning the Japanese language. Based on the analysis of this pilot study, a prospect on learning Japanese in Korean-Chinese middle schools became clear. Finally, the pilot study also aimed at helping the teachers in Japan in teaching Korean-Chinese students in Japan.

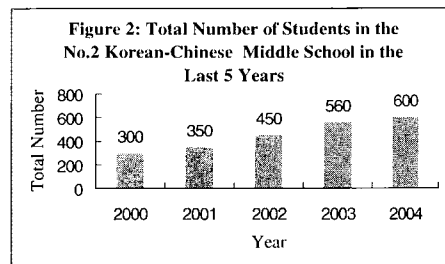
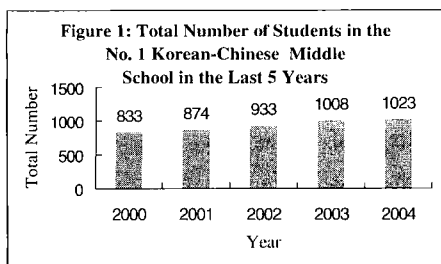
## 2. Research on the Numbers of Japanese-learning Students in the No.1 and the No.2 Korean-Chinese Middle Schools, Shenyang

The No.1 Korean-Chinese Middle School, with a history of 57 years, is under the direct leadership of the Education Committee of Liaoning Province, while the No.2 Korean-Chinese Middle School, with a history of 50 years, is under the leadership of the Education Committee of Shenyang Municipal Government. Japanese and English courses are offered in the two middle schools. Table 1 shows the number of registered students in the two middle schools in 2004.

**Table 1: The Registered Number of Students in 2004**

Name of School	Number of English-learning Students	Number of Japanese-learning Students	Total Number
No.1 Korean-Chinese Middle School	678	345	1023
No.2 Korean-Chinese Middle School	240	360	600

Figure 1 and Figure 2 show the increase in the number of students in the No.1 and the No.2 Korean-Chinese Middle Schools in the 5 year span, from 2000 to 2004.



Due to the baby boom in the early 1980s, most of the Chinese junior and senior middle schools have been accepting many more students in recent years than before. Figure 1 and Figure 2 show this increase in the number of students. This increase is expected to last for another 20 to 30 years (Huasheng Newspaper, 2004). Figure 3 illustrates the change in the number of Japanese-learning students in the last 5 years.

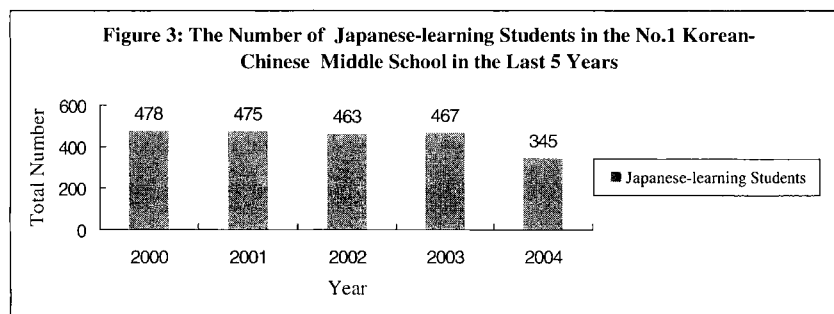
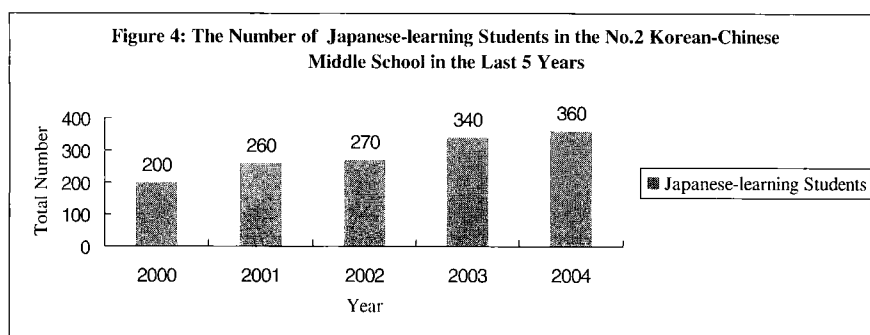


Figure 3 shows that there was a gradual decrease in the number of Japanese-learning students in the last 5 years. The author supposes that this change has been caused by the wide use of the English language in the world (Thomas, 2005), in addition to the spread of English education in China after English was admitted as a subject at the primary schools in 2001 (Fusheng Xiahou & Yongchen Teng, 2003).

Figure 4 illustrates that the number of Japanese-learning students has gradually increased in the No. 2 Korean-Chinese Middle School in the past 5 years.



### 3. Questionnaire: Japanese Language Education in No.1 Korean-Chinese Middle School in Shenyang City of Liaoning Province, PR. China

In order to do further research on Japanese education in the No.1 Korean-Chinese Middle

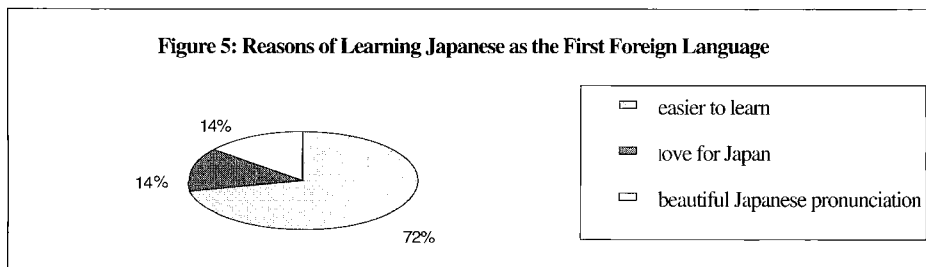
School, a study utilizing a questionnaire was conducted with the aim of analyzing the students' attitude towards learning Japanese. This questionnaire is composed of 6 questions shown in section 4 of this paper, and they were answered by 10 third-grade students in the school.

#### 4. Analysis of the Answers to the Questionnaire

(1) *Which language would you like to learn, Japanese or English, and why?*

This question aims to show the reasons for learning Japanese or English.

Among the 10 subjects, 2 answered that they are interested in learning English because English is more important than Japanese. 1 of the 10 subjects said that he or she likes neither Japanese nor English, because English is extremely hard to learn and Japanese is not a widely acknowledged foreign language. 5 subjects answered that they like Japanese because Korean, which is their other native language along with Chinese, and Japanese share a lot of commonalities in phonetics and syntax, and thus, it would be easier for them to learn Japanese than English. Figure 5 shows the reasons for learning Japanese as their first foreign language which were pointed out by 7 subjects.



(2) *Do you think it is easy or hard to learn Japanese, and why?*

This question aims to find out how the subjects feel about learning Japanese. The hypothesis is that if it is felt to be hard, learning Japanese will not arouse the subjects' interest.

40% (4 subjects) of the subjects answered that they regard Japanese as a difficult language because of cultural differences and the difficulty of the grammar of Japanese. It was also discovered that 30% (3 subjects) consider Japanese as a moderate or partly difficult language. The last 30% (3 subjects out of 10 subjects) stated that learning Japanese is easy since the

Japanese language is similar to Korean.

*(3) Among 5 basic skills in learning Japanese, that is, listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating or interpreting, which one are you good at, and why? What skill do you think will play an important role in your future study or work, and why?*

This question was asked to see which skill(s) should be emphasized in teaching Japanese as well as which skill(s) has/have more practical value than the others.

With regard to the first question, 7 out of the 10 subjects answered that they are good at reading and writing, because they have been doing a lot of exercises in class. To the same question, 2 subjects answered that they are good at listening since they have been listening to Japanese tapes and watching Japanese TV dramas. 1 subject answered that he/she likes speaking. Furthermore, 90% of the 10 subjects answered that they regard listening and speaking as the most necessary and important skill for the future social demands, since to acquire the oral communication skill is the most important purpose of learning a foreign language. In addition, 1 subject regarded that translation or interpretation will play a very important role in business society.

The above answers also suggest that the reading materials in Japanese classes should have a focus on the audio-video content in order to cater for students' needs.

*(4) What kind of Japanese textbooks do you prefer, and why?*

This question was asked with the intention to find out what types of textbooks would be welcomed by learners of Japanese.

80% of the total subjects answered that they like to use skill-oriented textbooks. Furthermore, 2 subjects said that they like to use the textbooks, which are directly imported from Japan because there are plenty of frequently-used vocabulary as well as drills in the textbooks. It is heart-warming to see that in recent years, students have direct access to purchasing a Chinese-versioned Japanese textbook at the bookstores, such as *Minna No Nihongo* and *Shin Kiso Nihongo*.

*(5) Do you think some of the present Japanese teaching methods need improvement? If "Yes", please write down specifically what method(s) is/are necessary.*

This question helps to discover whether or not some of the latest teaching methods should be adopted in the classroom setting, in order to meet the demands of the Japanese learners.

Figure 6 shows the results.

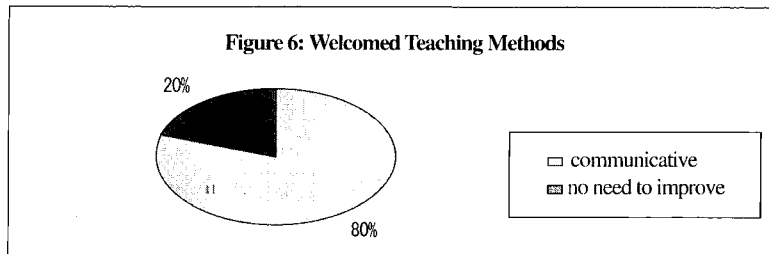


Figure 6 suggests that communicative teaching method is welcomed by most of the subjects. The communicative method emphasizes the cultivation of listening and speaking skills. 2 subjects answered that they are satisfied with the present teaching method, because their Chinese teachers are good enough and they have enough time to speak with native Japanese teachers for the purpose of improving their oral communication command.

(6) *Which language will have more influence in the future, Japanese or English, and why?*

Question 6 attempts to illustrate the prospect of Japanese language learning and teaching. 3 of 10 subjects regard English as the most widely used language with a very broad prospect both at the present and in the future.

3 subjects mentioned that Japanese has much more advantages than English for the future. Simultaneously, they gave a different opinion on English as follows: English has lost its competitiveness because most educated people in the world can speak English and thus English is no longer a foreign language but a global language. On the contrary, Japanese will be more influential because the number of Japanese learners is comparatively less than the number of English learners. The other 4 subjects argued that there will be no great difference in competitiveness between Japanese and English because both of the two languages are very important in business.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the number of Japanese learners in the No.1 and the No.2 Korean-Chinese middle schools in Shenyang and the questionnaire conducted in the No.1 Korean-Chinese middle school, it is clear that Japanese education in Korean-Chinese schools in Shenyang has been developing. According to the analysis of the questionnaire, Japanese is

welcomed by the students besides English, because it is being well used in business. Additionally, it became obvious that basic Japanese knowledge should be emphasized, and teaching methods for arousing interest are indispensable in Japanese education for the Korean-Chinese students. As a final remark, the author hopes that the data and the analysis presented in this paper will contribute to the Japanese education for Korean-Chinese students enrolled in Japanese universities.

(Shenyang University, PR. China and Kanazawa University, Japan)

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## 中国瀋陽市第一・第二朝鮮族中学校における 日本語教育—現状と展望

瀋陽大学外国語学院 崔 岩

### 要 旨

日中国際交流の進展により、日本の大学へ留学する中国人学生が増加しつつある。金沢大学にとっても例外ではない。その大半の学生は、中国籍朝鮮族であり、中国語と朝鮮語の両者を母語とし、彼らの第一外国語は日本語である。中国では、外国語は

小学校から教え始め大学まで教えるが、その必修言語は英語である。また、教える学校が少ない事もあるが、一部を除き、日本語とロシア語のみが選択科目か必修科目として開講されている。他の外国語は、一部の大学で教えられているだけである。

近年、日中貿易が急速に進展しつつある。それに伴い、ロシア語よりも日本語を学ぶ学生が増加しつつある。例えば、瀋陽大学では、2004年度に日本語を専攻した学生数は18名であったのに対し、ロシア語を専攻した学生数は6人であった。

このような背景下で、著者は、2005年3月、瀋陽市朝鮮族第一中学校と同第二中学校における日本語教育の現状を調査した。本論文では、2000年から2004年までの日本語学習者数の変遷とその学ぶ目的、及び今後の動向について報告する。本論文は、将来の中国籍朝鮮族学生への日本語教育に資するものである。

**キーワード：**比較日本語教育、中国籍朝鮮族学生、調査研究